

Message Text

SECRET

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63

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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P R 022315Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6005

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USNATO 1323

S E C R E T REYKJAVIK 0150

EXDIS

FOR UNDER SEC SISCO FROM IRVING

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: DFIS,NNATO, MARR

SUBJECT: ICELAND'UK FISHERIES DISPUTE

REF: STATE,23710

1. YOUR TIMING WITH KROYERN(REFTEL) WAS PERFECT. I HAVE STRONG REASON TO BELIEVE (BASED ONNCONVERSATIONS WITH PRIME MIN HALLGRIMSFON'S SPECIAL ASSISTANT YES-TERDAY AND FONMIN AGUSTSSON TODAY, PROTECT BOTH) THAT YOUR TIMELY IMPUT STRENGTHENED BACKBONE OF HALLGRIMSSON AND MADE THE MORE RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS OF THE CABINET SLOW UP THE GOVT'S RACE TOWARD SUICIDE. ALTHOUGH JUSTICE MIN JOHANNESSON STILL OPPOSES WITH A VENGEANCE ANY KIND OF CONCESSION OR AGREEMENT WITH UK, HIS DRIVE MAY HAVE BEEN SETNBACK A BIT BY THE SUD-DEN STRONG LEADERSHIP REPORTEDLY DISPLAYED BY HALGGRIMSSON IN SATURDAY'S CABINET SESSION.

2. HALLGRIMSSON IS SAID TO HAVE STRESSED WITH MORE FORCE THAN HERETOFORE THE DANGER ICELAND FACES OF LOSING THE CONFIDENCE AND SUPPORT OF OTHER NATIONS IN ITS DISPUTE WITH UK IF GOI IS NOT FORTHCOMING

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WITH OFFER OF GOOD FAITH AND FAILS TO RECOGNIZE

UK'S WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE. ALTHOUGH THE GOVT IS UNANIMOUS IN ITS FEELING THAT UK'S LATEST OFFER, WHICH AMOUNTS TO 85,000 TONS OF WHICH 65,000 ARE COD, IS TOO HIGH TO ACCEPT, HALLGRIMSSON MADE STRONG PLEA THAT ICELAND MUST MAKE A REASONABLE COUNTER OFFER. HE REQUESTED AUTHORIZATION TO OFFER AN INTERIM AGREEMENT. PROGRESSIVE PARTY MEMBERS, EXCEPT FOR JOHANNESSEN, INDICATED THEY "MIGHT" BE WILLING TO GO ALONG WITH HALLGRIMSSON PROVIDED INTERIM ARRANGEMENT DOES NOT GO BEYOND 3 MONTHS (WHICH BRINGS TIME TO MAY 1976, WHEN FRG AGREEMENT BECOMES VOID IF EEC TARIFF CONCESSION PROBLEM NOT SOLVED BY THEN). HALLGRIMSSON IS REPORTED TO BE WILLING TO ACCEPT THIS ON ASSUMPTION IT BUYS TIME DURING WHICH HE HOPES THERE MIGHT BE SOME INDICATION OF DIRECTION OF MARCH LOS CONFERENCE. THIS, PLUS QUESTION OF WHETHER TO RESRICT UK BY NUMBERS OF TRAWLERS OR TONNAGE (AND AMOUNT OF THAT TONNAGE) COMES UP FOR DISCUSSION AT TO-MORROW'S CABINET SESSION. HALLGRIMSSON IS COMMITTED TO SEEK APPROVAL OF ANYTHING ON ANY OFFER HE MAKES TO UK AND HE IS COMMITTED TO REPLY TO WILSON TO-MORROW. ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN TO-MORROW, BUT AS OF TONIGHT, AT LEAST, THINGS ARE NOT AS BLEAK AS THEY WERE A FEW DAYS AGO.

IRVING

SECRET

NNN

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